1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11

CHAPTER X

MARKETING, TRANSPORTATION, AND PROCESSING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

44 Introduction. The institutions of marketing, processing, and transportation in the Recôncavo are of two basic types, local and regional. Those which serve the local economies, that is, the municípios, are traditional. These are the municipal market and the casa de farinha [178] (manioc mill). The institutions which serve the regional economy--sugar and tobacco processing plants and marketing systems--have their traditional element but have been extensively modified in the last half 489 century. Much the same division is reflected in the transportation systems of the Recôncavo, for although the chief media within the local economies are essentially traditional and primitive, the transportation 128 net of the region as a whole has a number of modern features. The discussion which follows will deal with the various institutions which have developed in the Recôncavo to accommodate the marketing, transportation, and processing of the more important agricultural products.

443 Marketing of Agricultural Products. Municipal markets play an important role in the exchange of the agricultural products in the Recôncavo as in most of Brazil. Large quantities of agricultural goods are sold within the local area in which they are produced, and much of this exchange takes place within the municipal market. The feira is the regular open market which usually is held once a week in the smaller centers but somewhat more frequently in the larger cities. It [364] is usually housed in a public building, the municipal mercado. The other type of municipal market is the matadôuro municipál (slaughter

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443 house). The municipal markets of the Recôncavo have a highly institutionalized character supported by long tradition. There have been
[178] very few modifications in the local marketing system either to accept new products or to incorporate new techniques. Despite their highly institutionalized character, markets serve to accommodate and to re-enforce and stabilize the basic personal relationships between buyer and seller. Thus it is both difficult and misleading to approach marketing from a purely economic point of view.

Weekly markets (feiras) are held in every villa and cidade of the Recôncavo. Each of these feiras has a specified day and location. Usually the market of the cidade will be held on a different day than those of the villas of the locality, and usually adjacent cidades have their markets on different days. This arrangement facilitates the marketing of surplus products and makes it possible for itinerant buyers and sellers to travel from feira to feira. The market place
[366] of most cidades and of the larger villas includes a public building
[347] and the adjacent streets, and in some cases, a corral. Usually the market building itself is a large shed with open windows and doors, earthen or concrete floor, and no internal divisions except those provided by the pillars which support the roof. Stalls are sometimes provided in the newer or more pretentious buildings, but this is exceptional. Generally the market is located on a main square or a principal street. On the day of the feira, market activities expand beyond the main buildings and onto the streets, covering an area of about one city block in a typical center.

Participation in the feira is practically universal--the rural areas of the município, or the distrito if it is a villa market, are half emptied on market day. At sunrise or even earlier the farm families, or sometimes only the farmer, his wife, or child, begin

To the west, on the third hill, along the "beach," and in the small valleys, there is a different atmosphere. Here, in the Caquende, Boqueirão, Cortume, and Rua Nova (see map of town), there are no sobrados, no signs of former grandeur. The houses are of another style--small, one-story buildings with no air of antiquity about them. Some are made of brick, but most are of mud on a bamboo or mangue frame. Many have been coated with whitewash, some recently and some a long time ago. On the summit of this third hill, the Oiteiro, are the poorest houses of all, one- and two-room mud houses with thatched roofs. Recently in this section there have been some new-style houses built, tipo bangalo (bungalow-type), and there are signs of a growing prosperity among a few enterprising people. These areas of fishermen, of small storekeepers, and of those with crafts such as carpentry, bricklaying, and shoemaking, are the most heavily populated parts of the town of Vila Recôncavo today. According to the old inhabitants of the town, this section was undeveloped sixty years ago, and, to the old people, Vila Recôncavo is still up there on the hill, in the area of the sobrados. Nevertheless, the majority of the stores are in the lower part of town, which even has its own chapel. It is here that the children play although they must go up the hill to school. It is here that there are groups of men gossiping and having a drink of rum. It is here that an attitude of open friendliness prevails, and there are friendly faces at the windows. It is here that the drums beat when the African gods are feted.

The post office, located in the upper part of town, also has a telegraph. Messages go by special telephone to the nearby town of Centro, from where they are sent by wire. There is also a public telephone in the town which has two extensions, one in the house of the mayor and one in the house of the doctor. Other people must go to the telephone office to make or receive calls. The telephone is very uncertain; not only is it frequently impossible to get a call through but often nothing can be heard once the connection is made. From the town it is possible to speak through Centro to Salvador. It is also possible to speak to the sugar factory, and through its switchboard to several of the sugar plantations.

In recent years electricity has been brought to the town, and, in addition to lights on the streets, 78 of the 408 buildings in town have electricity. Of these, twenty-one have radios, and three have electric irons. Only the doctor, the health post, and the bar have refrigerators.